

Remarks

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 18 and 20-36 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 17 and 19 have been canceled by this amendment.

I. Objection to the Title

The Examiner has objected to the title for the reasons set forth on page 2 of the Office Action. Applicants have amended the title in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion so as to overcome this objection.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 20 and 24-28 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this amendment, Applicants have rewritten claims 20 and 24 in independent form, thereby placing these claims in condition for allowance.

Regarding claims 25-28, Applicants note that each of these claims depends from rewritten claim 24 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Claim Rejections

Claims 17-19, 21-23 and 34-36 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mental (US 4,617,195); and claims 29-33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mental (US 4,617,195) in view of Kita (US 5,585,695).

As noted above, claims 17 and 19 have been canceled by this amendment.

Regarding claims 18, 21-23 and 29-36, Applicants note that each of these claims depends from rewritten claim 20. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 18, 21-23 and 29-36 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Takayuki ISHIKAWA et al.

By: Kenneth W. Fields
Kenneth W. Fields
Registration No. 52,430
Attorney for Applicants

KWF/jmj
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
January 4, 2006